Saskatchewan

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Agriculture Development Fund

FINAL REPORT

PROVINCIAL EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR/FACS 8TH ANNUAL MEETING

19990138

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Prepared by: Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan (FACS)

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PROVINCIAL EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR
8TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
OF THE
FARM ANIMAL COUNCIL OF
SASKATCHEWAN (FACS)

PROJECT 19990138

Final Report

July 2000

a) **SUMMARY**

Over the past several years, the Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc. (FACS) has participated in the Saskatchewan Livestock Association's (SLA) Annual Convention, which traditionally was held toward the end of January each year. Overall, FACS's involvement with the SLA proved to be a useful networking relationship. However, due to a large number of concurrent sessions scheduled during the SLA Convention, time restrictions became restrictive for growth. As a result, the FACS Board and staff investigated the possibility of hosting their own meeting and seminar.

The objective of this educational seminar was to increase awareness regarding the growing animal welfare issues, as they relate to sustainable agriculture, consumer issues, trade, food labelling, environmental issues and future challenges.

This seminar was offered to individuals involved both directly and indirectly in the livestock industry, with a focus on industry leaders.

Although this initiative was led by FACS, this one day seminar was supported by key provincial commodity organizations and government and promoted as a "united effort" in jointly working towards a common goal.

The objectives established were met through the materials delivered in the presentations. Evaluations from the attendees of the seminar, which included participants from the three prairie provinces, also showed project objectives were met.

b) **TECHNICAL REPORT**

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

There has been increasing consumer concern with respect to the care of animals. This indicates the need to improve communications between the livestock sector and the general public. The primary function of FACS is to address and promote the responsible care of food producing animals through:

- Becoming the focal group of contact in Saskatchewan when issues are raised on animal care by both the public and extremist groups
- To provide education and information programs relating to animal care for producers, the general public and through the educational system
- Public relation activities to develop a better understanding of the value of animal agriculture
- Development and collection of pertinent and credible information relating to animal care
- Monitoring and participating in issues and legislation that affect animal care
- Encouragement of research relevant to animal care
- Encouraging industry participants to develop, promote and enforce responsible animal management techniques
- To solicit industry funding to fully support FACS

- Project activities, achievements, papers, presentations etc.

FACS was pleased to present an exciting millennium project, the *Commodity Connection 2000.* This unique conference, was held on January 14th in Saskatoon, and was a must for leaders in the agriculture and agri-food industry. Issues of major importance to our industry were covered including:

- livestock and international trade
- food labeling
- the McDonald's initiative for animal welfare in Canada
- consumer concerns and trends
- animal welfare and sustainable agriculture

The conference featured high-profile, world-renowned speakers:

- Dr. John Webster, Professor of Animal Husbandry, University of Bristol, England
- Mr. Norm Luba, Executive Director, North American Equine Ranching Information Council, Louisville, Kentucky
- Dr. Ron Usborne, Vice President, Quality Assurance Caravelle Foods, Brampton, Ontario
- Dr. C.M. (Red) Williams, Professor Emeritus, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon

Through this conference, FACS took the lead in uniting all commodity groups and key industry players in a common forum, to discuss issues that affect us all. *Commodity Connection 2000* provided a significant opportunity to network with colleagues and receive the most up-to-date industry information on consumer issues, trade, food safety and animal welfare.

The FACS approach was to promote this initiative as a high profile and proactive cross-commodity industry forum. To support this approach, we had support of each and every commodity group and key industry players for this "united" endeavor.

FACS provided a special rate for students and was pleased to have a number of university students attend this seminar as part of their curriculum.

- Discussion of results and conclusions

Following the seminar a survey was circulated to all of the attendees of which we received approximately a 47% return rate. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the program to provide guidance of future activities. (Survey results attached)

FACS received many telephone calls as well as personal feed back complimenting the initiative and the strength of the conference. Feedback was received from SPI Marketing Group Inc., Sask Pork, University of Saskatchewan (both students and faculty), Wyeth Ayerst, Canadian Food Inspection Agency and a number of producers in attendance.

- Indication for further development

Based on information from the survey, as well as the overwhelming support from our members to continue forging ahead independently in organizing a conference, FACS is planning a second "Commodity Connection" Conference in January 2001. Again, a number of world renowned and well respected speakers will be participating in the conference. The Saskatchewan Veterinarian Medical Association has been invited to assist with promoting this conference to veterinarians as

well.

- Information of benefit to producers, processors or government

The information shared at the conference provided a broader understanding of the pressures, legislation and realities of the animal agriculture industry. It also provided insite on how others have approached animal welfare issues and strive to continually "think outside the box" in their industry.

c) PERSONNEL

The Farm Council operates on a very limited budget. FACS employees a part time Executive Director and secretary.

All projects are coordinated under the direction of a voluntary Board and administered by the Executive Director, Adele Buettner.

d) **EQUIPMENT**

Costs affiliated to rental charges were the banquet room, two slide projectors and a cordless microphone.

e) **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT MATERIALS**

Included in this report is:

- a copy of the post card advertisement
- a copy of the brochure
- a copy of the FACS*Tracs* newsletters promoting the conference

f) **PROJECT PHOTOS**

No photos are available

g) **SADF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

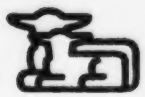
FACS has acknowledged ADF support & commitment in the following manner:

- recognition on the "post cards"
- recognition on the brochure
- recognition in the Annual General Meeting and convention packages
- recognition on signage
- verbal recognition
- recognition in newsletter
- recognition on the FACS website

h) **Expense Statement**

I have included a full budget for your review.

F • A • C • S
Farm Animal Council of Saskatchewan Inc.



Commodity Connection 2000
Evaluation Form Summary

The total number of registrants for the Meeting and Conference was 106. Of those 106 registrants 50 completed the Evaluation Form for a return of 47%.

Do you like the new format of the FACS Annual Meeting and Conference?

43 (86%) Yes 2 (4%) No 5 (10%) Undecided

Would you prefer FACS hold its Annual Meeting and Conference in conjunction with the Saskatchewan Livestock Association Conference?

9 (18%) Yes 14 (28%) No 27 (54%) Undecided

Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding improvements to the FACS Annual Meeting and Conference?

- ◊ Watch the order of speakers - may aid in avoiding conflict.
- ◊ Very interesting presentations.
- ◊ Listen to the comments made by the crowd. They will tell you what they are interested in hearing next year.
- ◊ No, I found it very interesting and informational.
- ◊ The speakers were all very informative and had a great range of knowledge. Perhaps a 10 minute break between speakers would have kept the attention of the crowd. I found some people disinterested after 2 hours of straight presentation/discussion.
- ◊ More time for questions - excellent - good speakers.
- ◊ Room was rather cold - not a big issue. Conference speakers were very good as was the panel to conclude. The conference was very informative and thought provoking. Well Done!
- ◊ None at this time.
- ◊ Could you have a component of education and how the producers can help send a positive message, through the schools particularly.
- ◊ Assiduously avoid British speakers. Great message but could have delivered point without personal assassination (education vs propaganda).
- ◊ Very well planned and excellent speaker content.
- ◊ I feel if the meeting was in conjunction with other livestock organizations more people would be in attendance.
- ◊ To be held in conjunction with Livestock Association.

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- ◊ Note paper in the conference package, for notes based on speakers info.
- ◊ Time is a concern at the Livestock Convention but I prefer it with the SLA.
- ◊ No, enjoyed it immensely. John Webster was great.
- ◊ Your brochure targets producers, processors and marketers. As an animal science student I really enjoyed this seminar and think it would be a great idea for your committee to advertise at the Universities. The future educators and representatives come from this department.
- ◊ Do more work on transportation.
- ◊ Be careful of what order you put your speakers in - may help avoid potential conflicts of interest.
- ◊ Increased promotion. As an animal science student at the U of S, I'm sure there are more students who will be the future of the industry who would be interested to attend.
- ◊ Could attract more people if held with SLA convention.
- ◊ Really enjoyed today's speakers and format.
- ◊ Different venue i.e. Saskatoon Inn or Travelodge vs Ramada/Sands.
- ◊ Was excellent - liked the format.
- ◊ No.
- ◊ No.
- ◊ Offer discount rate to representatives of 4-H clubs.
- ◊ Excellent conference and speakers!! Was a good turnout, but unfortunate that more didn't attend this conference.

Are there any speakers you suggest would be suitable to present at future FACS conferences?

- ◊ Perhaps some of the Heads of the Canadian National Farm Quality Assurance Programs for Beef, Pork, Sheep, etc.
- ◊ What is being done with ostrich, alpacas, wild boars, etc. by FACS? Are there speakers with some knowledge on codes of practice? These are "farm animals" and seem to be absent from this organization.
- ◊ Janice Swanson - Kansas State University - how should industry respond to consumer demands - someone from McDonalds, Wendy's or perhaps a major grocery chain.
- ◊ Excellent speakers.
- ◊ Perhaps some retailer/processor types that are driving welfare/handling standards.
- ◊ Speakers with hands-on solutions to problems. Temple Grandin was excellent.
- ◊ Dr. Joe Stookey. Members from industry ie. hog barn manager or feedlot operator and their perspective on the real importance of animal welfare.
- ◊ Transportation expert.
- ◊ Loved Webster's comments about education - I would like to see industry people giving us specific information.
- ◊ No suggestions but I enjoy controversial speakers.
- ◊ Producers who have been successful in using "welfare friendly" systems eg. Tom Van Milligan.
- ◊ A speaker that could explain how industry and welfare could more thoroughly work together.
- ◊ All speakers had good topics but John Webster and Temple Grandin certainly had a lot of "food for thought".
- ◊ Game farm industry participation? Invitation, representation?
- ◊ I'm a student at the U of S, and I don't know many speakers. However, the speakers at this conference were very informative.
- ◊ Would like to see more presentation and discussion of applied research.
- ◊ They were all very good! They all did an excellent job.
- ◊ Animal activist to speak their views.

Do you have any other general comments regarding FACS?

- ◊ I found the presentations very informative and as this being the first FACS conference I have attended, would definitely come again.
- ◊ This is the first FACS conference I have attended. The speakers were very informative and the luncheon was excellent -- overall, the organizers of this event did a terrific job. I would definitely attend in future years. Thank you Adele!
- ◊ Excellent organization, serving the livestock and poultry industry and to the public.
- ◊ Very interesting. Good variety of opinions.
- ◊ As a student, the discount was wonderful. I probably wouldn't have been able to come had I had to pay full price. Also the material was something that you don't really get in the classroom and from such renown speakers.
- ◊ This is the first conference I have attended. On this basis, I will attend another conference.
- ◊ The conference was very informative and thought provoking. Well Done!
- ◊ Adele, appreciate the good work you have done in regard to FACS. Hopefully the sheep industry will be more of a financial supporter in the future as the budget will allow.
- ◊ Keep up the good work.
- ◊ Great show Adele. This is a real service. I commend you for your efforts and foresight in bringing this together. Thanks for a great day!
- ◊ Need to have "feelers" out to consumers for feedback.
- ◊ FACS does an outstanding job.
- ◊ Excellent organization - I'm glad to be a part of it.
- ◊ Facilities were atrocious. Two (2) pillars at centre of room made the view of screens and speakers impossible for 1/3 of the people attending.
- ◊ Maybe have a representative show a video on 1st year agriculture classes about the activities and goals.
- ◊ Very thought provoking.
- ◊ Thank you. Job well done on a well run, informative conference.
- ◊ Very impressed by work done.
- ◊ Very well run and organized - handouts and literature are excellent.
- ◊ One day conference is better because it allows a person to see more points of view from different people.
- ◊ Keep up the good work!
- ◊ Keep up the good work.
- ◊ Adele, I thought the American vs the Brit was very entertaining. Keep up the great job.
- ◊ This was an excellent session, some controversy is good - we should not become complacent - expect some major developments in the next 5 - 10 years.
- ◊ Good job - great information.
- ◊ It continues to amaze me how successful and effective this organization has been and continues to be. The quantity and quality of work from a small budget and staff is exceptional.
- ◊ I think we should analyze John's comments about education vs promotion in all actions.